

March 2008



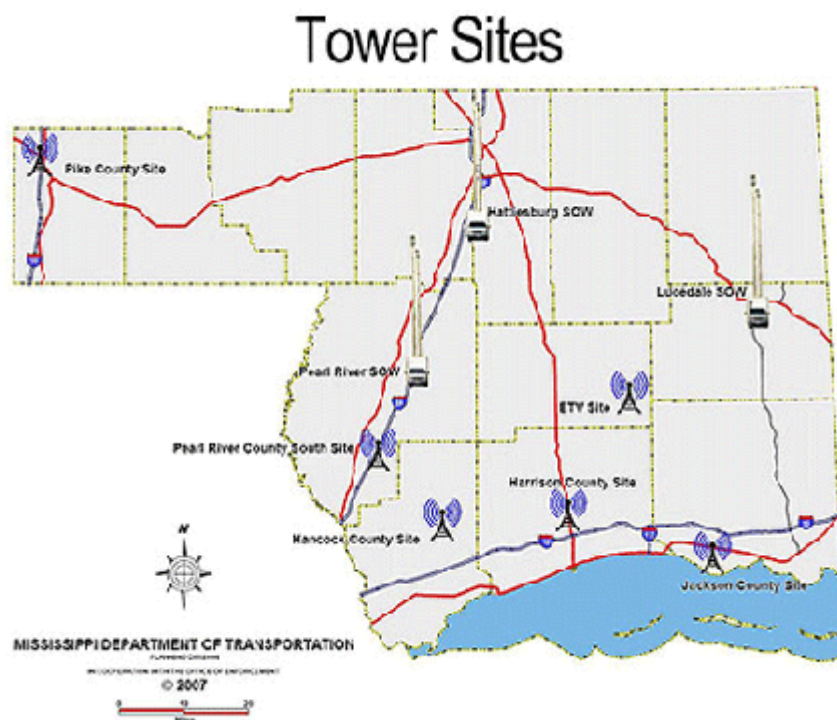
Welcome to the first *MSWIN Bulletin*, which is planned to be a periodic update on the progress of the Mississippi Wireless Integrated Network. MSWIN will provide interoperable emergency radio communications and allow for a more coordinated response during times of crisis. After a competitive selection process, Motorola was named by the Mississippi Wireless Communications Commission (WCC) as the vendor of choice for the \$162 million project. The state and Motorola signed a contract in July 2007. Phase I of the MSWIN project is now underway on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. When completed, the network will allow seamless mission-critical communications between state agencies, first responders and local governments. If you would like additional information, please contact the MSWIN office at 601-359-5333.



"Hurricane Katrina demonstrated it is imperative that government agencies have survivable interoperability – the ability to seamlessly communicate with each other – and this statewide, uniform wireless system will both expedite and support interagency communications.

"With a simple turn of the radio knob, a Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) official could talk to the Harrison County Emergency Operations Center, the Hinds County Sheriff's office or Tupelo Police Department. Reliable communications means a quicker response time, which will help save lives and deliver time-sensitive information during a crisis."

-- Governor Haley Barbour on the need for MSWIN



FEMA Sites Signal MSWIN's First Operations

MSWIN is starting to become a reality in Mississippi.

Through an agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), MSWIN has begun its first operations – with wireless interoperable communications in South Mississippi.

Following Hurricane Katrina, FEMA saw the need to upgrade its communications efforts in the lower third of the state and planned to equip six South Mississippi towers with equipment to allow seamless, mission-critical communications. Those towers are located in Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Stone, Pearl River and Pike Counties, and among other benefits, will allow seamless and interoperable communications during an evacuation of South Mississippi.

Recognizing the progress made by Mississippi and the MSWIN project, in July 2007, FEMA contracted with the vendor for the purchase of the tower equipment and approximately 800 handheld devices that would be used in emergency responses – a \$9.6 million participation from the federal government.

MSWIN obtained the tower sites and buildings and contracted with local companies to install antennas, cabling, electrical connections and generators, a job/task which was completed in 90 days. The system is interoperable with the Harrison County emergency communications system and is the same technology used in Hancock and Jackson County as well as the state of Louisiana.

Motorola Delivers on Mobile Equipment

Motorola, at the request of the WCC, has expedited the design, construction and delivery of mobile equipment for use in the event of a hurricane or any other emergency.



The system consists of four SOWs – sites on wheels – that will serve as the backbone for the MSWIN Rapid Deployment system. The master SOW is stationed

at the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency's headquarters in Rankin County. The three mobile SOWs can be dispatched throughout the state and provide immediate interoperable wireless communications to state and local responding agencies – even when the existing systems have been deemed inoperable, as was the case with Hurricane Katrina.

Each SOW is equipped with a collapsible 100-foot telescopic antenna and generator. These sites can be used in a single site trunking configuration for special events or disaster situations. With the microwave transmitters and receivers, the mobile SOWs can be connected to the Master Site, enabling the networking for wide-area trunking operation.

The SOWs were first unveiled at the 2007 Southern Governors' Conference, held in Biloxi, and received high praise from law enforcement officials who utilized the new technology.

In case of a disaster in South Mississippi, the three mobile SOWs can be dispatched and work with the FEMA tower sites to increase the coverage area of the system. An emergency response plan would be to dispatch the mobile SOWs to pre-determined locations in George, Forrest and Pearl River Counties, which in conjunction with the FEMA sites would provide 97 percent radio coverage throughout this area. The partnership of the two networks will allow a first responder in Pascagoula to talk with an emergency worker in McComb or Louisiana – hundreds of miles away.

E-Communication: DMR Benefits From Network

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is already benefiting from the MSWIN in South Mississippi. The DMR received federal grant funds for communication equipment. The DMR then requested Wireless Communication Commission approval to purchase approximately 70 radios with those funds. DMR purchased dual-band 700/800 MHz radios capable of operating on Jackson and Hancock Counties' existing 800 MHz systems and the FEMA/MSWIN 700 MHz system. The radios were then programmed to operate on the FEMA/MSWIN system and are operating on the network as DMR's primary connection. The DMR staff has bragged about the clarity of transmission, coverage and functionality of the devices and the system. Below is an email from Lt. Col. Clyde "Rusty" Pittman, the DMR assistant chief of enforcement, to Bill Buffington, director of the MSWIN project.

"Bill, just wanted to drop you a line and let you know how the new radio system that we went to, with the ok from the commission, is doing. Since some more of the towers have been turned on we are picking up coverage in areas where we had no coverage at all. We are now able to talk from the Alabama state line to the Louisiana state line and as far north as Collins. We also have coverage south in the marine waters up to 18 miles south of the barrier islands. We have never had that distance of coverage....Just wanted to let you know how pleased we are with the system."

MSWIN Oversight

The Mississippi Wireless Communication Commission, created by Senate Bill 2514 during the 2005 legislative session, is charged with oversight of the MSWIN project. The Commission is "responsible for promoting the efficient use of public resources to ensure that law enforcement personnel and essential public health and safety personnel have effective communications services available in emergency situations and to ensure the rapid restoration of such communications services in the event of disruption caused by natural disaster, terrorist attack or other public emergency."

The Commission has representatives from state and local entities. Current members include:

Chairman: Mr. Chris Epps, Commissioner
MS Department of Corrections

Mr. Charlie Williams, Commissioner
MS Department of Public Safety

Dr. Ed Thompson, Executive Director
MS Department of Health

Col. Michael Berthay, Chief
MS Highway Safety Patrol

Mr. Willie Huff, Enforcement Director
MS Department of Transportation

LTC Gary Ladd, Communication System Manager
MS National Guard

Mr. Tom Lariviere, President
MS Association of Fire Chiefs

Mr. Jay Ledbetter, Executive Director
MS Office of Homeland Security

Mr. David Litchliter, Executive Director
MS Department of Information Technology Services

Mr. Tom McAllister, Response & Recovery Bureau
MS Emergency Management Agency

Mr. Mark McCreery, Chairman
SafeCity Initiative

Mr. Johnny Dupree, President
MS Municipal League

Mr. Tommy Moffett, Chief
MS Association of Police Chiefs

Mr. James Newman, President
MS Sheriff's Association

Mr. Keith Harkins, Assistant Director
MS Department of Environmental Quality

Mr. Joel Yelverton, Assistant Executive Director
MS Association of Supervisors

Advisory Board:

Senator Alan Nunnelee, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee

Senator Dean Kirby, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee

Senator Nolan Mettetal, Chairman
Senate Public Utilities Committee

Senator Nickey Browning, Vice-Chairman
Senate Public Utilities Committee

Representative Johnny W. Stringer, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee

Representative Percy W. Watson, Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee

Representative Tyrone Ellis, Chairman
House Public Utilities Committee

Representative Ray Rogers, Vice-Chairman
House Public Utilities Committee

